

STATE OF MICHIGAN
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

**POLICY REGARDING TESTING OF MICHIGAN
LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS**

Mrs. Gire moved, seconded by Mrs. Curtin, that the State Board of Education adopt the following policy regarding the testing of Michigan limited English proficient students:

The State Board of Education has traditionally supported a rigorous, well-rounded program of curriculum and instruction for all students, and an equally rigorous assessment of student achievement. At the same time, the State Board of Education recognizes that to be valid and reliable, assessments must actually measure what is intended: the knowledge of content, acquisition of skills, and achievement of curricular benchmarks.

The educational achievement bar is set high in Michigan. Every child will participate in assessment. Up to this time, however, we have not had sufficient instruments to reliably assess the achievement of students with severely limited English proficiency. Many of these students arrived in this country very recently with no English language skills at all.

At its meeting on January 23, 2003, the Michigan State Board of Education approved a policy allowing local school districts to exempt from the Michigan Educational Assessment Program students who have been in United States schools for less than three years and whose limited English proficiency was determined likely to result in invalid or unreliable scores. The State Board understood that such a resolution could jeopardize compliance with Michigan's timeline waiver under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1994, but took such action in the interests of Michigan's limited English student population.

In addition, the State Board of Education was concerned that requiring severely limited English proficient students to take a test that could not provide reliable and valid assessment of what they know and can do would discredit its accreditation system as well as No Child Left Behind.

In the January 23, 2003, policy the State Board directed the Michigan Department of Education to develop alternative tests for limited English proficient students, which tests could be in the native languages of students or in simplified English.

Since that policy was adopted, several actions have taken place. First, the Michigan Department of Education, in collaboration with the Office of Educational Assessment in the Department of Treasury, has developed alternative tests in Reading and Mathematics. Second, the two departments have also developed proposed accommodations for limited English proficient students taking the regular Michigan Educational Assessment Program tests.

Meanwhile, the United States Department of Education has clarified that the No Child Left Behind Act requires that the score of any student exempted by the January 23, 2003 State Board of Education policy must be included in the denominator (factored as a zero) in computing the adequate yearly progress of a school or district.

In that light, the State Board of Education directs the Michigan Department of Education to provide the two alternative tests in Reading and Mathematics to local school districts to be administered in a spring 2003 testing window. A school district may, on an individual, case-by-case basis, exclude limited English proficient students from the alternative tests with the understanding that the excluded students would still be included in the denominator used to calculate Adequate Yearly Progress. Students taking the alternative tests will not be required to take the Science and Social Studies tests.

This resolution supersedes the policy of the State Board of Education adopted on January 23, 2003.

Ayes: Austin, Bauer, Curtin, Gire, Moyer, Straus, Weiser
Nay: McGuire

The motion carried.

Adopted February 27, 2003